

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 PC-01 OMB-01 CU-02

TRSE-00 SY-05 A-01 OPR-02 /068 W

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O 121200Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4621

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 3777

EM O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJECT: GUJARAT GOVERNMENT FALLS

1. THE CONGRESS AND ITS SUPPORTERS IN THE GUJARAT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OUTVOTED THE RULING JANATA FRONT(JF) EIGHTY-NINE TO EIGHT-SEVEN ON A BUDGET ITEM MARCH 12. ONE JF MEMBER AND ONE INDEPENDENT WERE ABSENT. THE SPEAKER ADJOURNED THE ASSEMBLY AFTER THE VOTE. CHIEF MINISTER BABUBHAI PATEL WILL SUBMIT HIS RESIGNATION TO THE GOVERNOR AND HOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE LATER THIS AFTERNOON.

2. THE BULK OF FORMER KMLP LEGISLATORS ENTERED THE CONGRESS (R) (NEW DELHI 2894) AND ON MARCH 11 A JANA SANGH MLA AND A CONGRESS (O) MLA ANNOUNCED THAT THEY WERE WITHDRAWING THEIR SUPPORT FROM THE JF GOVERNMENT. THE CONGRESS (R) STRENGTH INCREASED TO EIGHTY-FOUR. FIVE INDEPENDENTS VOTED WITH CONGRESS. FORMER CONGRESS (R) CHIEF MINISTER AND HEAD OF THE NOW DISSOLVED KMLP CHIMANBHAI PATEL IS CREDITED WITH MASTERMINDING
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THE DEFECTIONS THAT BROUGHT ABOUT THE JF MINISTRY'S DOWNFALL.

3. A GUJARAT (CONGRESS (R) MP (LOK SABHA) TOLD AN EMBOFF MARCH 12 THAT THE CONGRESS BROUGHT DOWN THE FRONT FOR BASICALLY TWO REASONS: (A) IT WAS HARBORING "ABSCONDERS" FROM THE LAW SUCH AS SOCIALIST LEADER GEORGE FERNANDEZ AND WATED RSS LEADERS. (B) TH JANA SANGH WAS A PART OF THE COALITION. ACCORDING TO THE M. P., PRESIDENT'S RULE WILL BE IMPOSED WITH A VIEW TO THE POSSIBLE FORMATION OF A CONGRESS GOVERNMENT IN THREE-FOUR MONTHS TIME. THE ASSEMBLY WILL THEREFORE BE SUSPENDED BUT NOT DISSOLVED. THE MP COMMENTED THAT THE EMERGENCY RESTRICTIONS AND THE FACT THAT MANY OF THE GUJARAT'S STUDENT LEADERS ARE EITHER IN CONGRES OR DIVIDED POLITICALLY RULES OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF THE TYPE OF STUDENT VIOLENCE THAT FORCED THE RESIGNATION OF THE CHIMANBHAI PATEL MINISTRY AND DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSEMBLY IN 1973.

4. COMMENT: OUR ASSESSMENT IS THAT THE PRESENCE OF EMERGENCY STRICTURES, THE LACK OF POLITICAL UNITY AMONG STUDENTS, AND THE FACT THAT THE GUJARAT COALITION MINISTRY WAS BROUGHT DOWN BY POLITICAL MANEUVERING AND DEFECTIONS RATHER THAN BY IMPOSITION OF PRESIDENT'S RULE LESSENS THE POSSIBILITY OF WIDE-SPREAD VIOLENCE IN THE STREETS ALTHOUGH THERE MAY BE SOME INCIDENTS. WE ANTICIPATE A WAVE OF ARRESTS AIMED ESPECIALLY AT UNDERGROUND ELEMENTS THAT HAVE GRAVITATED TO GUJARAT SINCE THE EMERGENCY BUT ALSO POSSIBLY INDLUDING SOME JF LEGISLATORS AND PARTY WORKERS.
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